

Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District

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ERICD Board Meeting

March 9, 2010

7:15 PM

Chairman Emerson Wildes called the meeting to order at 7:15.

Present were Directors Emerson Wildes, Suzanne Hourihan, Ron Mucci and Walter Elwell; Mike Kenyon, NRCS; Ramona LeBlanc, RI SCC.

I. Minutes

A motion was made to accept the minutes of the February 9, 2010 meeting with the following corrections: 1) the meeting was called to order at 7:22; 2) a note should be made that there was no NRCS representative at the meeting. Motion approved.

II. Reports

A. Treasurer's: Reconciliation statements for both accounts were distributed. Ramona was authorized to take the computer to the SCC office to have Quick Books files transferred.

B. Chair: Emerson would like to step down as chair, citing lack of time to communicate with Board and to follow up on meetings and

issues.

C. District Manager: The issue of hiring a part-time District Manager was discussed. The resumes of three candidates for the SCC's ag tech position and Doug McGovern's (SRICD's part-time DM) will be forwarded to ERICD Board for review.

D. NRCS: Because only Board members were present, Mike Kenyon was able to present the NRCS Conservationist Report. Contracts are being reviewed and updated. To date in ERI, 23 EQIP applications, 10 WHIP applications 7 AMA applications and 1 CSP application have been received. 42 applications have been received statewide for high tunnels (the high tunnel packet was distributed). Melissa Hayden, ERICD's new conservationist is on maternity leave. She and Mike met with Ron, Walter and Dick. NRCS needs to obligate funds in the next few months and the April 1 application deadline may be extended.

Resource Inventory: NRCS is streamlining and would like to look at resources on a District level to determine funding, target issues and to determine priorities. The role of the District in this process will be examined in the near future.

Walter raised the point that the District managers may have a role in keeping NRCS agreements current and active if they receive conservationist reports in a timely manner. If members of the public are present the confidential reports may not be presented. Should an executive session be

called in that case? Could reports be presented at RIACD meetings and brought back to Board? Question: are associate directors allowed to see reports?

III. Old Business

A. Update on Reorganization: Walter asked to receive minutes within a week of the meeting date with a list of things directors have been assigned to do. An authorized signator on account must set up online banking. Emerson will do so. Walter will pick up mail and leave in office. A new phone line has been installed for ERICD at the Greenville office.

A motion was made to authorize Ramona to have the Verizon phone number disconnected: Walter/Suzanne: uananimous.

A motion was made to cancel the Workers' Compensation policy and to request an audit to try to get premiums partially rebated: Walter/Suzanne: unanimous.

A motion was made to authorize Ramona to review files and discard financial information over seven years old: Walter/Suzanne: unanimous. Other records will be reviewed by the Board.

A motion was made to pay bill for email hosting and to cancel service: Walter/Ron, unanimous. A free email account will be established.

B. Ag Tech Interviews: Suzanne reported that all four candidates interviewed are qualified, although to varying degrees. A recommendation will be made to the SCC to enter agreements with all four.

C. CIG: Postcard announcement distributed. District directors will be present at workshop to be held at ERICD on 3/31.

D. USDA Grant: Ron and Emerson attended meeting at URI. The grant has three basic components: an incubator farm, a land link and an

equipment bank. There is another meeting to further discuss on Friday, March 12 at 1:00.

E. Aquaculture Project: Walter will investigate if any project underway in aquaculture or Sakonnet Bay management that the District could have a role in.

F. Elections: Emerson asked for volunteers to accept role of Chair. Walter indicated he would on the condition that he could delegate other Board members to attend various meetings and that he would expect a written report with five days of those meetings. The report should recommend actions that should be taken by the ERICD board with reasons cited. Walter would provide a synopsis of those reports which would be sent out with a meeting agenda two weeks before Board meetings. A list of upcoming meetings will be discussed at each meeting

and a vote take as to whether and ERICD representative should attend.

A motion was made to appoint Walter as Acting Chair: Suzanne/Ron, unanimous.

Walter assumed role of Acting Chair and conducted rest of meeting.

IV. New Business

A. District Manager: As discussed previously, resumes will be reviewed. Before progressing too far, Ron suggested a formal evaluation of possible funding for a DM position be undertaken.

A motion was made that before considering hiring a District manager the potential funding

for that position be evaluated: Ron/Suzanne: unanimous. Walter appointed Ron to begin evaluation.

B. Office Status: A motion was made to keep office open for the month of April: Emerson/Suzanne, unanimous. The next agenda will call for an update from Dick Hart about discussions he has had with FSA and the Farm Bureau about those organizations using the office to meet with clients.

C. CCPI: NRCS has funding for partners to help with various Farm Bill activities including attracting applicants and guiding them through the application process. After March 9 meeting, Gina DeMarco (NRICD) offered to write a 1 page summary proposal to NRCS. Walter will get a copy when complete.

D. Other: Walter, Ron and Dick Hart attended a meeting with Mike Kenyon and Melissa Hayden. A written report was submitted by Walter.

Walter asked for a list of phone calls received by ERICD at Greenville office, with a list of actions taken.

Walter thanked Mike Kenyon for his report.

Walter will post a sign on office door with new phone number listed.

Walter reported that he spoke to Wayne Montgomery regarding Wayne's appointment by the Governor to the FFOS subcommittee.

Wayne has been in contact with the Governor's office.

A motion was made to adjourn at 9:40: Emerson/Suzanne: unanimous.